(b) if so, the inspection team found that 6 percent of the SLRs were of an old brand, reconditioned and not acceptable;

(c) whether despite the team's adverse observations, the sanctioned amount was drawn in full and paid as advance to the Jabalpur COD in September, 1993; and

(d) what action has been taken by the Union Government against those held responsible?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. The Self Loading Rifles which were to be issued to Border Security Force had been withdrawn from service by the Army on induction of rifles 5.56mm INSAS and were serviceable, though in used condition. These rifles were rejected by the representatives of the Border Security Force on the grounds that the weapons though serviceable, were in used condition. As no new serviceable rifles were available for issue, the Border Security Force were offered ammunition against the amount of advance given by the BSF. This was agreed to by the Border Security Force.

(c) Yes, Sir. The amount was drawn by Directorate General of Border Security Force and paid as advance to the Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur.

(d) In view of the replies given at (b) and (e) above, no one from Central Ordnance Depot, Jabalpur can be held responsible in this regald.

Russian warships patrolling Indian Ocean

5122. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Russian warships have started patrolling the Indian Ocean for the first time in almost a decade;

(b) if so, whether two destroyers and a tanker from Russia's Pacific Fleet, based in Vladivostok called Mumbai in mid-February as part of two-and-a-half months training Voyage that will also take

them to the former Soviet naval base at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam; and

(c) if so, to what extent it has helped India in protecting the ' Indian Ocean?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Two Russian ships Admiral Vinogradov and Admiral Panteleev visited Mumbai at the invitation of the Indian Navy to participate in the International Fleet Review held at Mumbai, in February, 2001. The ships were accompanied by a tanker, Vladimir Koleshinsky. The ships departed Mumbai on 20th February, 2001.

(c) Does not arise in view of above.

Acquisition of inflight refuelling capacity for fighter bombers

5123. SHRI RUMANDLA RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Air Force is set to acquire an in-flight refuelling capability for its fighter-bombers;

(b) if so, whether any concrete proposals in this regard have been worked out;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by what time it is likely to be introduced?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) to (d) An agreement has been signed in February, 2001 with Uzbekistan for procurement of six IL-78 Flight Refuelling Aircraft (FRA). These afrcrafts would be delivered by December, 2003.

New Nomenclature of M/s. Bofors

5124. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Bofors Gun Manufacturing Company of Sweden has changed its name;